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mine what plants, both native and exotic, are common enough to demand a place in it, or so uncommon that they may be omitted." Should it be found that the descriptions of more cultivated plants are wanted by those who use the book, we are half promised that "if the book answers its purpose reasonably well, its shortcomings, as regards them, may be made up hereafter."—H. M.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE MUSEUM OF COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY.*—By the present report it appears that this Museum, with its great store of specimens, requires to be enlarged in order to become useful to the public, and also requires that the annual income of \$10,000 should be about doubled in order to carry on the work of publishing, and the internal arrangement of the collections. We hope that the grant of the Legislature, during their last session, will more than supply this want. The director presses upon the trustees the claims of scientists to a partial use of the collections, which in their present state are not available to investigators. The work done this year seems to have been wholly for the preservation of the collections, with the exception of Dr. Wilder's dissections of the Selachians, and Mr. Leo Lesquereux's labors on the Fossil Plants. Dr. Hagen, although at work in the Museum, seems to have contributed nothing to the present Report. We quote from Mr. Lesquereux's report the following remarks on American Fossil Botany:

"The few vegetable remains, for example, obtained from the Tertiary of Tennessee and of Mississippi, and from the Cretaceous formation of Nebraska and California, have demonstrated facts, which science was scarcely prepared to admit:

"First. That the floras of our ancient formations already had peculiar types, which separated them from each other in the different continents. This is even evident in the vegetation of the Coal measures. Therefore, the supposition of a continental union of Europe with America by Atlantides or other intermediate lands, is proved to be untenable.

"Second. That the essential types of the old floras, of the Cretaceous and tertiary formations have passed into our present vegetation, or are preserved to our time. The Cretaceous of America, for example, has already the Magnolias, which we find still more abundant in our Tertiary. This last formation has furnished a number of species of the genus *Magnolia*, nearly identical with that now existing in the United States, while the genus is totally absent in the corresponding floras of Europe. More than this: we find in our Tertiary the same predominating types marked on both sides of the Rocky Mountains. On the Atlantic slope, leaves of magnolias, of oaks, of elms, of maples and poplars, and not a trace of coniferous trees; while in California and Vancouver Island, the red woods or *Sequoia*, abound in the Cretaceous and Tertiary, as now they still form the predominant vegetation of the country. These few facts are mentioned only to show the importance of collections of fossil plants from every formation of our American continent, the only part of the world where questions of general significance concerning paleontological distribution can be studied with some chances of satisfactory conclusions."

NATURAL HISTORY OF BIRDS.†—There is at present great need of an elementary work on Ornithology, treating of the general principles of the science, written in popular language, and adapted to the wants of learners. The preparation of such a work seems to be the design of the authoress of "Lectures on Ornithology," Part I. of which we have already received.

* Annual Report of the Trustees of the Museum of Comparative Zoology. Report of the Director, 1867. 8vo, pp. 22.

† Natural History of Birds. Lectures on Ornithology. In ten parts. By Grace Anna Lewis. Philadelphia: J. A. Bancroft & Co. Part I. 12mo, pp. 32. 1868.

This treats of general principles, and is to be understood as being introductory, while the remaining parts will be devoted to the structure and further classification of birds; their general habits and instincts; the relations of their *habitat* or residence to physical causes, and to their geographical distribution; to which is to be added "a briefly descriptive catalogue of the birds of the Middle States," and "of many of the most beautiful or remarkable birds of the world." It is designed, also, to devote special attention to the structure and exquisite colors of the plumage, and the microscopic character of the downy covering of the young; a field of research as yet hardly approached, yet full of interest, and of practical value to science.

In this first part the writer very appropriately devotes several pages to an account of the structure of the egg, and the mode of development of life within it, and subsequently notices the differences noticed in the external form of the egg as seen in the different groups, and the peculiar variations in the color and texture of the shell. The greater part, however, is devoted to a discussion of the classification of birds; a new or considerably modified system of which is proposed. It shows that the writer has given the subject considerable thought, and is in many points highly commendable, in fact approaching in general more nearly to the natural system, than several of the classifications recently proposed by our (reputed) highest authorities. We scarcely see the propriety, however, of making a third sub-class of the Ostrich and the Dodo, and their respective allies, nor of dispersing the *Præcoces* so widely among the *Altrices*, as is done, not only in the present case but generally. The subdivision, by Oken (according to Agassiz, by Bonaparte as generally received), of birds into two grand divisions, be they sub-classes or orders, seems to have been a truthful and important recognition of two very natural groups, the subsequent mingling of which seems only to tend to prolong confusion. The parallelisms between the two groups pointed out by Professor Dana, or the occurrence of representative groups in each, seems strongly to corroborate their naturalness.

Miss Lewis's modestly written book, however, seems likely to supply a gap in our ornithological literature, and as it bears unmistakable marks of originality, and promises a clearly expressed epitome of the present state of the science, we heartily commend it as a work fully entitled to generous patronage.*—J. A. A.

REVIEW OF THE SCANDINAVIAN PUBLICATIONS IN NATURAL HISTORY DURING 1867 AND PART OF 1868.† (In a letter from Dr. Lütken of Copen-

* The Naturalist's Book Agency will supply this work at 35 cents a part.

† Dr. C. F. Lütken, an accomplished naturalist and assistant in the Royal Zoological Museum, at Copenhagen, has kindly consented to prepare for the *NATURALIST*, a yearly review of the progress of Natural History in Scandinavia, of which the following interesting report, to be concluded in the next number, relates to the literature of Denmark and Norway. The conclusion, embracing Sweden and Finland, will follow soon. As these works are rare and generally inaccessible, containing papers by the most thorough and reliable observers in Northern Europe, we think the readers of the *NATURALIST* are especially fortunate in securing such reports from the fountain head of natural science in Northern Europe.—EDS.